THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman."

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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PRAYER.

ॐ

न मंत्रं नो यंत्रं तदपि च न जाने स्तुतिमहो
न चाह्वानं ध्यानं तदपि च न जाने स्तुतिकथाः ।
न जाने मुद्रास्ते तदपि च न जाने विलपनं
परं जाने मातस्त्वदनुसरणं क्लेशहरणम् ॥

न मोक्षस्याकांक्षा न च विभववांछापि च न मे
न विज्ञानापेक्षा शशिमुखि सुखेच्छापि न पुनः ।
अतस्त्वां संयाचे जननि जननं यातु मम वै
मृडानी रुद्राणी शिवशिव भवानीति जपतः ॥

O Mother! I do not know Thy sacred hymns, nor the ways of Thy worship; nor how to invoke and meditate upon Thee, nor how to pray to Thee. Nor do I know the rituals of Thy worship, nor how to lay before Thee my griefs. But this I know that to follow Thee is to remove all my sufferings.

No desire have I for liberation, nor hankering after wealth; nor wish for knowledge, nor yearning for happiness. O Mother! This only I beg of Thee—May my life pass in repetition of Thy and the Lord's holy names.

SANKARA.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA.*

Puri, Sashi Niketana.

Dear A.—,

Received your letter and also B'S. His motive is not clear. He does not wish to marry. He wants to serve the country. It is all right. It appears to me that it is all due to want of assimilation of the Western education. I do not know how far it is possible to serve others and the country before one's character is well formed. My belief is that the man who cannot solve his own problem will not be able to be of much use to others. Anyhow the boy is good. If he leads a pure life, he may get a taste for higher life.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say: "Fix thy hold firmly on God and do thou perform thy wordly duties, and, thou shalt be free from all dangers." Then again he said: "In the play of hide-and-seek, if the player succeeds in touching the grand-dame (Boori), he is no longer liable to be made a 'thief' of by the seeker. Similarly by once seeing God we are no longer bound down by the fetters of the world," You should always bear in mind that the goal of life is to realise God. First of all know Him; and let your faith and devotion to His feet become strong. Then you may do whatever work you wish to do. And as long as you live some sort of work or other you will have to do. When you have no difficulties for your maintenance or that of your family and have all kinds of convenience, you will be doing something or other either for the sake of your body or impelled by your ego or past Samskaras. Therefore when you cannot but do works it is better to

* Finding a few letters of the Swami containing many rare hints to spiritual practices, we incorporate them in the "Spiritual Talks". We hope, these will be of immense practical value to our readers.—Ed. V. K.

do such things as would bring peace to your mind and benefit to others. Those who have taken shelter under His feet and obtained His grace never go wrong. Every word spoken by them, every act done by them lead to the good of humanity.

It is good to remain unmarried. Those who keep Brahmacharya gain extra-ordinary powers. And only through such men do supernatural or divine powers manifest themselves. Sri Ramakrishna used to say: "The heart of the devotee is God's drawing room." If we wish to become His devotees and servants we must become pure; for only in pure hearts can He reside. He is far beyond the reach of the impure. When your mind and heart become as pure as glass without stain, then only God can reside in you and you can claim to be His servant, devotee, dependent or child. Just as a bright clear mirror gives a good reflection of the face, so does a pure heart manifest Him truly So I tell you who are young and free from all taints to instal Him in your heart, and thereby allow no room for other things to enter. It is not possible to know Him except through pure and holy living. In this life you must realise Him by this means.

The boy is good and has some auspicious marks on him. He can make spiritual progress if he perseveres. To get the B.A. or M.A. degree or to become a barrister and make some money is not a very high ideal of life, and this gives but a temporary enjoyment. It will not help one to attain God, the goal of human life. First of all form your character and make it perfect. Then whatever you may undertake, you may easily accomplish. If for studying religious books you can spend even one-twelfth of the time wasted in preparing for your B.A. or M.A. degree, you can derive many thoughts and ideas of the higher life. Students generally complain that they have no time when they are

asked to read the sacred books. My dear boy, if you wish to become a man and live in eternal happiness, plunge yourself in deep meditation and resolve to reailse Him or die in the attempt.

I do not want anybody to become a fool. Fools cannot understand religion. Those who want worldly enjoyment let them become B.As. and M.As. But those who care only for Supreme Bliss no university degrees are necessary. Sri Ramakrishna used to speak of Granthas (books) as Granthis (knots). This does not, of course, include the Sastras, Swamiji's works, etc. Reading purely secular books makes people more vain, excites evil propensities in them and takes them far away from God. Any book which does not induce devotion and faith in God, however entertaining for the time being, will ultimately cause misery. The egotism arising from B.A., M.A., etc., drags one very far away from God. The possession of wealth also works a similar mischief. Money does more harm than good.

Neither in the sleeping nor waking state could Sri Ramakrishna touch a coin. What he has taught us all by his own life is that there is no other path to attain God but through Tyaga (renunciation). By running after sense enjoyments, man becomes degraded to the level of the brute. If you want to be a man, practise renunciation and love and realise Him. Renouncing momentary pleasures befits you for the Supreme Happiness. And by renunciation it is meant that by giving up all sense pleasures of this life you should take shelter at the lotus feet of the Lord and become mad with His love and devotion. Look at the life of Sri Ramakrishna and be a man in the best sense of the term.

Renunciation alone can give you peace. Renounce all for His sake and make God your own and pray to

Him: "Thou art my father, Thou art my mother, Thou art my brother, Thou art my sister and Thou art my all." When giving up all thoughts of the enjoyments of this life you are able to pass day and night incessantly in His thought and prayer, you will feel infinite joy and become a man. What that joy is cannot be conveyed through words. In a word the human heart is too small to hold it. In such a state His grace, His love and His presence will always be felt by you.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Mendacious Propaganda against India

An organised propaganda of darkest lies and abominable calumny is being carried on for a long time in the West against the Indian people. Men and women of India as a whole are being made the object of the most grotesque misrepresentation and indiscriminate vilification, and lowered in the eyes of the Western people. Through the irony of fate the proud children of this ancient land lie prostrate to-day. And it is their helpless condition that emboldens the unscrupulous foreign calumniators to continue with impunity their unholy campaign on an extensive scale. A recent book entitled "Mother India" by one Miss Mayo—a cold-weather American tourist, containing the most wild generalisation and malignant condemnation of Indian culture and character, is being given a very wide publicity in the British and the American Press. The omniscient writer who seems to have a special attraction for the shocking and morbid aspects of human life, bases her preposterous conclusions on abnormal, hospital and criminal case reports and on her biassed observations of solitary happenings, maliciously charges the entire Indian people of physical degeneracy, sex perversity and moral depravity of various kinds. Her outrageous publication is now being used as a powerful weapon against India

in both England and America. But this scurrilous propaganda against India is by no means a new thing. And of all countries it is in America that the Indians, and particularly the Hindu's have been most vehemently maligned, and of all people it is the Christian missionaries who, with some honourable exceptions, have been most active in this campaign of deliberate denunciation of the Indian nation.

Libels against India

This wholesale indictment against the men and women of India is as old as the Christian missionary propaganda in the East. Even more than three decades back when Swami Vivekananda went to America to preach the message of the Vedanta, he was shocked and distressed to find how the missionaries of Christianity had spread all over the country the most malicious libels against the Indian people. The missionaries spoke of the supposed depravity of the entire body of Indians from the platform and the pulpit. Books were written on India depicting her inhabitants in the darkest colours. Part of the Sunday school education of the American children consisted in creating in their minds a hatred against non-Christians, specially the Hindus who were described as the "most horrible devils on earth." The Swami was pained to see that his countrymen were most mischievously represented to to be a dark-skinned and semi-barbarous people who followed a religion of ghastly superstitions that could never produce a spiritual man, who indulged in child marriages, revelled in grossly immoral practices, ill-treated their women, killed their children, burnt their widows with their husbands, nay even killed themselves under the wheels of the car of Jagannath. The school books for boys and girls contained pictures of imaginary Hindu mothers throwing their children into the jaws of crocodiles in the Ganges, of huge cars crushing human beings under their wheels, of men

burning their wives at the stake with their own hands so that they might become ghosts and torment the husbands' enemies. Besides, the missionaries told the American people that Hindu widows were as a rule unchaste, that every village in India contained a pond full of bones of little babies,that Hindu fathers unable to marry their girls, married them to a god and encouraged them to lead a life of shame. These and other great "truths" were alleged to have been discovered by the missionaries everywhere in India. And they were proclaimed throughout the length and breadth of the American continent to men, women and children with a view to convince them of the necessity of supporting the Christian missions determined to save the soul of the Hindu "heathen" from eternal perdition.

Missionary Propaganda against the Swami

It was to proclaim the highest ideals of the Hindu religion and culture that Swami Vivekananda went to America. But along with this he had to perform the most unpleasant task of denouncing the gross and malicious libels showered upon the Hindu race by ignorant and bigoted missionaries and "Churchy" women of America. He boldly exposed the slanderers and their unholy methods of raising money for the foreign missions in India. The Swami's unique success and frank criticism created jealousy and heart burning in the missionary camps. Bigoted and unscrupulous Christian propagandists tried to injure his reputation. They abused and vilified him,—and went to the length of tempting him with women who were promised reward in case of success. But all these ignoble attempts were of no avail. Nay, the Christian missionary opposition, instead of thwarting, helped the spiritual mission of the Swami. He was acclaimed as a great prophet, seer and teacher by innumerable American men and women,

even by some of the most distinguished clergymen of the day. Besides, his activites affected the Christian propagandists financially. As the missionary report said, "Because of Vivekananda's success and teaching the contributions to the Indian missionary funds have decreased in one year by as much as one million pounds." This exasperated many of the low caste missionaries to such an extent that they were prepared to let their "soul go to hell itself" rather than let "this d—d Hindu", as some called the Swami, interfere with their work. They invented the blackest lies against him, and widely circulated them. Several times they addressed letters containing the most damaging calumnies against him to persons who had invited him as their guest. There were occasions when the Swami found the houses of his prospective hosts closed to him. But the malicious slanders were often detected, and the persons duped by the mischievous letters would make sincere apologies to the Swami, take him to their homes and be his most devoted friends and admirers. It is indeed unbelievable how the Swami who had deep reverence for Christ was continuously persecuted by those who posed to be the most devout of Christians.

The Swami's Attitude

These vicious slanders against the Swami's spotless character at times filled him with the bitterest indignation, and once he actually burst into tears while reading a baseless assertion, and cried out—"Oh! How deep is the wickedness of the world, and to what length men would go, in the name of religion, to cast aspersion upon another worker in God's vineyard!" About the slanders invented against him, the Swami wrote to an American friend—"I am astonished to hear the scandals the—circle are indulging about me Don't you see that however a man may conduct himself, there will always be persons who will invent the blackest lies

about him. At Chicago I had such things spread every day against me . . . And these women are invariably the very Christians of Christians!" And to his Indian friends, who expressed great solicitude at these missionary attacks, he replied—"In future do not pay any heed to what people say either for or against me. . . . . Truth is infinitely more weighty than untruth. . . . . It is the force of character, of purity and of truth—of personality. So long as I have these things you can feel easy; no one will be able to injure a hair of my head." In the midst of those personal attacks the Swami was however comforted to note that if the "blue-nosed" and "hard-spelled" American missionary fanatics drawn from low classes slandered him most vehemently, there were high class missionaries, sincere and liberal minded, who were not only not inimical, but were among his best friends and admirers, ever ready to repudiate the mischievous slanders manufactured against their "Eastern Brother."

Antagonism of the Missionaries in India

If the missionaries in America were up in arms against the Swami and were making base allegations against him, being unable to stop the spread of his ever-growing influence, the missionary bodies in India were not by any means keeping quiet. Even towards the beginning of 1894, they commenced their vigorous attack on the dangerous Hindu monk whose lecturers in America were not only affecting their funds but also were doing great harm to their proselytising activities in India. Baseless criticisms against the Swami printed in America were given wide publicity in the Indian missionary papers. Enterprising Christian publishing firms were bringing out "Christian Literature" containing, virulent criticisms of the Swami's speeches and sayings, misrepresenting them most grotesquely, and sometimes giving them even a political savour. Indeed the missionary

activity against the Swami, became at one time very strong in India. Articles and pamphlets were being published, criticising not only the Swami's teachings but also his diet and mode of living, with a view to create an opposition against him amongst the Hindus themselves. Reading some of the allegations regarding the Swami's taking Western food in America, a class of ultra-orthodox Hindus seemed to be antagonistic towards him for a time and even attacked him in strong terms. When his friends and disciples informed him of the missionary propoganda in India, and expressed their misgiving he sent them a very significant reply—"I am surprised you take the 'missionaries' nonsense so seriously. . . . If the people in India want me to keep strictly to my Hindu diet, please tell them to send me a cook and money enough to keep him. This silly *bossism* without a mite of help makes me laugh. On the other hand, if the missionaries tell you that I have ever broken the two great vows of the Sannyasin—chastity and poverty,—tell them that they are *big liars*. . . . As for me, mind you, I stand at nobody's dictation. I know my mission in life. I belong as much to the world as to India. What country has any special claim on me? Am I any nation's slave?

The Swami's Just Criticism and Appreciation

It has been part of the mission of the Christian propagandist to engage himself in a grotesque exaggeration of the evils in India and to denounce Indian culture as a whole. That is how he wants to preach his Westernised Christianity in India and other countries. But Swami Vivekananda showed him a better way of preaching religion. Unlike the Christian missionary, he never wrote any book containing scurrilous attacks on American men and women or on their life and culture, for the purpose of proving the urgency of a Hindu mission in America. If he criticised others, his criticism

was directed against those that deserved it without doubt. But sometimes the missionaries misrepresented his utterances. In one of his lectures he once referred to the "churchy" women of America and their power of inventing scandals. What he said was from his bitter personal experiences, for even in England a scandal was manufactured, and as later investigation proved to the great relief of the Swami's English friends, it was the work of a bigoted American woman This the Indian missionaries reported to be an attack on American women *en masse* to undo his work. To an American friend who informed him about the mischievous propaganda carried against him, he wrote—"Supposing I had said all sorts of fearful things against the "yanks"—would that be paying off a millionth part of what they say of our *mothers* and *sisters*? "Neptune's waters" would be perfectly useless to wash off the hatred the Christian "yanks" of both sexes bear to us, "heathens of India"—and what harm have we done to them?" Far was it from the Swami's purpose to condemn the nobler sections of American women for whom he had the greatest admiration. In a letter to the Maharaja of Khetre he wrote—"How many beautiful homes I have seen, how many mothers whose purity of character, whose unselfish love for their children are beyond expression, had many daughters and pure maidens, "pure as the icicle on Diana's temple" and withal with much culture, education and spirituality in the highest sense! Is America then full of only wingless angels in the shape of women? There is good and bad everywhere, true—but a nation is not to be judged by its weaklings called the wicked, as they are only the weeds that lag behind, but by the good, the noble and the pure, who indicate the national life current to be flowing clear and vigorous." Let the mischievous slanderers of Indian people bear these memorabe words in mind. How different is their way of judging men from that of the Swami.

The Swami's Example to the Missionaries

The average Christian missionary is ever anxious to prove the barbarous and benighted condition of the entire Indian people. But Swami Vivekananda, who placed truth above everything else, could not indulge in any wholesale condemnation of American men and women. He said the merits and also the evils of the American and his civilisation. "The Americans have their faults too," Said he, "what nation has not? But this is my summing up. Asia laid the germ of civilisation. Europe developed man, and America is developing woman and the masses. It is the paradise of the women and the labourer. The Americans are fast becoming liberal. Judge them not by the specimens of *hard shelled Christians* (it is their own phrase) that you see in India. There are those here too, but their number is decreasing rapidly, and this great nation is progressing fast towards that spirituality which is the standard boast of the Hindu." The Christian missionary in his ignorance thinks that there cannot be any true spiritual men outside his own fold. But the Swami could not hold such a narrow view. Among the cultured American men and women as well as among the upper class missionaries, many of whom were his personal friends, he found, as he said, noble souls who were "as broad, as liberal and as sincere" as the best of Hindus. Never has a Christian missionary been able to speak so highly of non-Christian people, however good and pious they might be. Religious bigotry and race prejudice do not allow him to see the best points in the followers of a different religion. But that was not the case with Swami Vivekananda. He rose above all limitations and narrowness, and recognised good wherever it was found. The missionaries of religion must be just and impartial. This is the ideal that the Swami places before them by the noble example of his life.

The Fallacy of the Critic

In every Society there are evils as well as good. And just as there are immoral and selfish men and women who commit the most heinous crimes without any sense of shame or consideration for others, so there exist pious and holy persons who live a life of extraordinary purity and devotion, and are ever ready to sacrifice their all for the good of their fellow men. This the bigoted critic is not prepared to bear in mind. He thinks as if there are no bad men in his own community and no good men in that of another. He seems to take it for granted that his people possesses all the highest ideals of life, while others have none to speak of at all. Again, he magnifies the evils in others and minimizes his own. He compares the best of his own people with the worst specimens of others. He places the highest idealism of his own society side by side with the grossest realities of other communities. He Judges his own people by a lower standard and others by a higher one which he does not dare to apply to himself or to his community. He sees the mote in other's eyes but not the beam in his own. He judges others while he himself dislikes to be judged. He is anxious to cast stones at others for their sins forgetting that his sins may be greater than theirs. Such is the mentality of the average Christian critics of India and her civilisation, and it is full of fallacy and contradiction. In direct opposition to the teachings of the prophet whose name he bears he takes up an attitude that is altogether wrong and objectionable.

Repudiation of the Charge

The missionary calumniator of Hinduism takes a most partial view of things. Blinded by his preconceived ideas, limited by his intellectual ignorance, and not unoften imbued with, as Sister Nivedita says, " a meaner motive still; the idea that if a true and lofty

tone is taken, money will not be forthcoming to support his own career," the critic cannot and often do not want to come in touch with the real state of affairs in the Indian life as a whole. From a few stray cases gathered from his own one sided experience or from other equally reliable missionary sources, whether religious, educational or medical, he comes to a most illogical generalisation, magnifies the sins of India and indicts the entire Indian people. It does not strike him that in a similar manner any one may pass even a stronger condemnation against his own people. When he describes the religion of the Hindus, which still produces saints of the first magnitude, as a bundle of gross superstitions, he forgets that the same charge has also been laid at the door of Christianity and that compared to the highest forms of Hindu spiritual culture, the ceremonial worship and prayer in the Church is nothing but a poor show of piety and devotion to God. When he denounces the Hindus as being guilty of child marriage, immorality and oppression of women, he fails to consider whether or not all maids and bachelors in the West lead a pure life, or the ever increasing number of divorce cases there are due to cruelty and sex irregularity, or a large number of the children that go to swell the orphanages, and the dead bodies of babies picked up in big Western cities drop from the skies. The missionary does not know, and he also finds it difficult to believe, that there are in India thousands upon thousands of holy men who lead a life of perfect purity, devotion and service, and that others too are trying to attain to this state through their fasts, prayers and physical and mental control. In the words of Sister Nivedita, "Hindus are a people amongst whom the monastic ideal is intensely living. In their eyes the widow, by the fact of her widowhood, is vowed to celibacy and therefore to poverty, austerity, and prayer." Again, when the critic speaks of the

common practice of the Hindu fanatics of throwing themselves deliberately under the wheels of the temple car, which is a downright lie, he does not remember that the number of cases of suicides are increasing by leaps and bounds in his own land and that such cases are comparatively few in India and that Hinduism looks upon suicide as a most heinous crime and condemns it in the strongest possible terms. There are in India cases of immorality, cruelty and crime as in other parts of the world. But these cannot by any means be attributed to the entire nation. Besides, in India poverty and squalor are not necessarily associated with crime, and the poor and the destitute, although subjected to starvation, disease and suffering, are less criminally inclined and more moral and God-fearing than those of the West. India enjoys in this respect, if not also in others a decided advantage over Europe and America. To depict the children of Mother India as a people lost in immorality and vice is a most gross and malicious libel. And most strongly do we repudiate it in the fiery words of Swami Vivekananda written from America in reply to the Madras Address—My Countrymen, I have been more than a year in this country I have seen almost every corner of their society, and, after comparing notes, let me tell you that neither are we " devils ", as the missionaries tell the world we are, nor are they "angels", as they claim to be. The less the missionaries talk of immorality, infanticide, and the evils of the Hindu marriage system, the better for them. There may be actual pictures of some countries before which all the imaginary missionray pictures of the Hindu society will fade into light. But my mission in life is not to be a paid reviler. I will be the last man to claim perfection for the Hindu Society. No man is more conscious of the defects that are therein, or the evils that have grown up under centuries of misfortunes.

"If as foreign friends, you come with genuine sympathy to help and not to destroy, God-speed to you. But if by abuses incessantly hurled against the head of a prostrate race in season and out of season, you mean only the triumphant assertion of the moral superiority of your own nation, let me tell you plainly, if such a comparison be instituted with any amount of justice, the Hindu will be found a head and shoulders above all other nations in the world as a moral race."

THE STORY OF SISTER NIVEDITA'S LIFE

By Swami Vedantananda.

Nivedita—"the dedicated"—was the choicest flower of womanhood offered by Swami Vivekananda at the feet of his beloved motherland. A well-born and highly cultured woman belonging to the proud white race, she came to adopt India as her own country, accept the ancient Aryan religion as her own religion, and love the Indian people as her own kith and kin. And so thoroughly did she transform herself that she became not only a noble embodiment of the highest Indian culture but also its ardent and eloquent interpreter and champion. Her surrender was without any reserve. She gave herself completely, and literally laid down her life for the service of India and her people.

Miss Margaret Noble, for that was the name of Sister Nivedita before she took the vow of life-long Brahmacharya and service, is said to have both Scottish and Irish blood, although she was predominantly Irish both by parentage and birth. She was born at Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, in 1867. "Very soon afterwards," as Mr. S. R. Ratcliffe says in his admirable memoir on the Sister, "her father, Samuel Richmond Noble, entered the Lancashire Independent Collge, in preparation for the Congregational ministry, but did not live to fulfil his early promise." Her mother—Mary Isabel Noble—was a lady of great faith and devotion. She fell seriously ill before the birth of her first daughter Margaret. And she prayed to the Lord to spare her for the sake of the child whom she dedicated to His service. As later events came to show, it was the will of Providence that the girl that was born, should live a life consecrated solely to the service of God and His children.

Little Margaret grew into a girl of rare personality and rarer intellectual powers. She came to evince a great interest in education, underwent training as a teacher in England, and gained great experience by serving in various girl's schools, particularly in one conducted by an ardent advocate of New Education in South London. In 1892 Miss Noble started a school of her own at Wimbledon, London, with a view to realise her ideals of girl's education. She was one of the most active and enthusiastic lady educationists interested in "the newer applications" of educational theory, when she came under the transforming influence of Swami Vivekananda during his first visit to England in 1895.

Miss Noble was an earnest seeker after the Truth, but very different from the so-called orthodox women who pin their faith in traditional modes of thought and forms of worship. By nature she was passionately religious, and once became a member of the Anglican church which however, could not satisfy her hungry soul hankering after the deeper and universal truths of religion. A bold inquirer, a keen reader and a deep thinker, she possessed a highly critical mind that could accept a truth only after a thorough test and analysis. "We were but fifteen or sixteen guests", says Nivedita in her great work, *The Master as I saw Him*, "intimate friends, many of us . . . We were not very orthodox, or open to belief. . . . . Most of us had, I incline to think, been singled out for the afternoon's hospitality, on the very score of our unwillingness to believe, for the difficulty of convincing us of the credibility of religious propaganda in general." It was a habit with Miss Noble to try to protect her judgment against ill-considered enthusiasm. She disputed the assertions of the Swami and raised great controversies, at times, becoming not only contentious but positively hostile. But the "Hindu yogi" instead of feeling offended at the attitude of the disputant must have felt glad at heart on the discovery of the superior stuff she was made of. Referring to this matter he said long afterwards to her—"Let none regret that they were difficult to convince. I fought my Master for six long years, with the result that I know every inch of the way! Every inch of the way!" Miss Noble resisted her Master only to be conquered by him heart and soul. And before the Swami left England she began to address him as "Master". Born with the heroic fibre herself, she "recognised the heroic fibre of the man" and desired to make herself "the servant of his love for his own people."

Swami Vivekananda was not like an ordinary preacher who spoke of the narrow doctrines and dogmas of a sect or denomination. As a true disciple of Sri Ramakrishna he always dwelt on the universal ideals of religion, and as the apostle of a new age, he advocated the exchange and assimilation of the best ideals of the East and the West. The wonderful breadth of his religious culture, the newness of his teachings, and the irresistible charm of his personality—all these came as a great revelation to Miss Noble. And naturally her scepticism yielded place to faith. She came to be convinced as she said later on that the Swami's call was sounded "in the name of that which was strongest and finest, and was not in any way dependent on the meaner elements in man."

The Swami visited England for the second time in April, 1896. On the previous occasion he had made many friends, but this time he won ardent disciples anxious to devote themselves heart and soul to the great cause of their Master. And Miss Noble was avowedly one of the most prominent among them. She had not very many opportunities to hear and know the Swami during his first visit. But now she was a constant listener to his talks and lectures, and became drawn towards him more than before. Recalling these days says the Sister Nivedita in her *The Master as I Saw Him*, "He had come to us as a missionary of the Hindu belief in the Immanent God, he called upon us to realise the truth of his Gospel for ourselves. . . . He was deeply convinced of the need for Indian thought, in order to enable the religious consciousness of the West to welcome and assimilate the discoveries of modern science, and to enable it also to survive that destruction of local mythologies which is an inevitable result of all world-consolidations. He felt that what was wanted was a formulation of faith which could make its adherents fearless of truth." The Swami always preached the Gospel of strength which made a tremendous appeal to the heroic heart of Miss Noble. He proclaimed that "character, and character alone, was the power that determined the permanence of a religious wave." He held that the duty of a citizen was resistance, while that of the monk non-resistance which in reality, was an expression of greater strength than resistance. "Forgive," said he, "when you can bring legions of angels to an easy victory." If the disciple discovered the glory of her Master, the Master also in his turn found out the rare worth of the disciple. "I have plans," he said to her, "for the women of my own country in which you, I think, could be of great help to

me." And how whole heartedly he accepted the disciple can be known from what he later on wrote to her. "I will stand by you unto death, whether you work for India or not, whether you give up Vedanta or remain in it. The tusks of the elephant come out, but they never go back. Even so are the words of a man."

Miss Noble responded to the call her Master and decided to proceed to India. She asked for her mother's permission and got it. It was very extraordinary for an orthodox Christian lady to readily allow her daughter to go to a strange land and cast her lot with a strange people. The mother had no doubt unbounded faith in her illustrious daughter. But the main reason why she unhesitatingly gave her consent was, as she long after told an American fellow-disciple of Miss Noble, that she remembered her old vow and was glad to see that it was going to be fulfilled though in quite an unexpected manner. She was also highly pleased to learn from the American lady that the very name that was given to her daughter by the Swami meant "the one consecrated." Strangely enough the daughter was never told by her mother of the story of her dedication to God. She came to know of it for the first time from the American lady friend, and must have marvelled to think that the course of life she came to take was as it were preordained even before her birth.

Miss Noble landed at Calcutta in January, 1898. Shortly after a party of friends arrived from America. All these Western disciples made their temporary home at the newly purchased quarters at Belur which later on became the headquarters of the Sri Ramakrishna Order. "It was as the guest of these friends, here at Belur," hints Sister Nevidita, "and later, travelling in Kumaon and in Kashmir, that I began, with them, the study of India, and something also of the home-aspects and relationships of the Swami's own life." Miss Noble's training began as soon as she came to India. She was initiated into the life of a Brahmacharini by her Master and was given the name by which she became well known all over the world. The Master took her on an extensive tour along with the American friends for the purpose of giving her a deep insight into Indian thought and culture,and also a personal training for the work he wanted her to undertake for the women of India.

Nivedita had to pass through a terrible conflict of ideals and consequent confusion at the beginning of her training. She had

constant clash with her Master who wanted to give a new mould to her personality by destroying her self-sufficiency and by removing the most cherished prepossessions of her mind. This period of transition, as she then felt it, seemed to be the most unhappy period of the disciple's life, but still it never occurred to her to retract her proffered service. Speaking of these days she observes, "Suffering is often illogical, and I cannot attempt to justify by reason the degree of unhappiness which I experienced at this time, as I saw the dream of a friendly and beloved leader falling away from me, and the picture of one who would be at least indifferent, and possibly silently hostile, substituting itself instead." But this suffering was in fact the travail of a new birth and was soon going to end happily. One day the Master said, "Let us begin a new life." With these words he lifted his hands, blessed his "most rebellious" disciple kneeling before him, and brought about an unexpected spiritual transformation in her life and thought. Nivedita came to be reborn as the true spiritual daughter of Swami Vivekananda. And she felt in place of the bitterness of conflict the ineffable sweetness of peace and reconciliation.

After her most profitable travels, Nivedita returned to Calcutta in the beginning of November, 1898 with a view to open, a girl school and "to make some educational discovery which would be qualitatively true and universally applicable, to the work of the modern education of Indian women." She became the guest of the community of the Hindu ladies of whom the Holy Mother—the nun-wife and chief lady disciple of Sri Ramakrishna—was the head. These holy women exerted a great influence on Nivedita's life, and revealed to her the grace and dignity, the ideal and glory of Indian womanhood. It was with the help of the Holy Mother and other noble ladies that Swami Vivekananda was able to make a place for this Western disciple in Hindu Society. Hereafter, Nivedita was to live the life of an orthodox Brahmin Brahmacharini. During the first half of 1899 she freely associated and dined with people of various classes, both Indian and European, in Calcutta. But the Master held up before her a different mode of life as she had to prepare herself for the women's work. He expressly told her during their voyage to England—"You must give up all visiting, and live in strict seclusion, you have to set yourself to Hinduise your thoughts, your needs, your conceptions, and your habits. Your life, internal and external, has to become all that an orthodox Hindu Brahmin Brahmacharini's ought to be.

The method will come to you, if only you desire it sufficiently. But you have to forget your own past, and to cause it to be forgotten. You have to lose even its memory."

Accompanied by the Swami, Sister Nivedita left Calcutta for the West in June 1899. This voyage of six weeks as well as her stay with him for about the same period as a guest of friends in America, brought Nivedita in most intimate touch with her Master's wonderful mind and personality, and enabled her to enter into the very depths of Hindu religion and culture. After this, besides spending a fortnight with him in Brittany in September, 1900, she never again had the opportunity of living with him. These were certainly the most precious days of her life. On the last evening of her stay in Brittany the Swami called her, and blessing her most heartily, said—"There is a peculiar sect of Muhammedans who are reported to be so fanatical that they take each new born babe, and expose it saying, 'If God made thee, perish! If Ali made thee, live!' Now that which they say to the child, I say, but in the opposite sense, to you, to-night—'Go forth into the world, and there, if I made you, be destroyed! If Mother made you, live!" With this practically ended the days of Nivedita's discipleship. The Swami returned to India at the close of 1900. Nivedita remained in the West until the beginning of 1902, when she came back to India as if to receive the final benediction of her Master who passed away in July, 1902.

After her return from the West, Nivedita resumed her work under more favourable conditions than before. All suspicions about her were removed. She was cordially accepted by the society she came to serve. The unfailing charm of her character, her intense love for India and Indian people and culture, her spirit of selfless service to all without distinction—all these endeared her to the people of the locality where she made her home. As Mr. S. R. Ratcliffe observes in his sketch on the Sister —"She was entirely accepted by her Hindu neighbours. In the bazars and lanes and by the riverside everybody knew her and she would be saluted as she passed with an affectionate reverence which was beautiful and touching to see. . . . The people remembered how when the plague broke out among them, Sister Nivedita had joined with the brethren of the Order of Ramakrishna in a crusade of nursing and sanative cleansing. And in times when there was no spectacular call of pestilence or flood, there went out from her house a constant stream of social and personal

service." While the Indian people loved Nivedita as their very own, the Europeans, except the few of her intimate friends who appreciated her life and ideal of service, looked upon her as a gifted "crank" who avoided European society with a "perverseness" unintelligible to them. But Nivedita knew her mission and was never known to repent for her choice. Without caring for praise or blame, she carried on her school work with great vigour and enthusiasm. In the early part of 1902 an Amrican fellow-disciple—Miss Christine Greenstidel, later on known as Sister Christine—joined her and came to shoulder the greater portion of her school burden. Sister Christine was a great educationist and introduced the most modern methods of education in the school. Both the Sisters tried their best to create there an ideal Indian environment. It was this that secured the confidence of the most orthodox families, and drew not only little girls up to the marriageable age but also a large number of married women and widows. The special merit of the school was that unlike the Christian missionary institutions it made no attempt to convert the pupils to any outlandish religion and culture. The students were helped to inbibe the highest Hindu ideals, traditions and customs along with their general education. The great experiment that was made by Nivedita and her colleague proved to be eminently successful. But it is unfortunate to think that while many admired the institution, very few came forward to help and support her financially.

Nivedita had to make the greatest sacrifice for the sake of the school. Forsaking all the comforts and luxuries of a Western home in the European quarters of Calcutta, she came to live an ascetic life in a small old house situated in a humble quarter of Northern Calcutta. But the small house "with its two court-yards, its limited second story, and its quaintly-terraced roofs, built at five different levels" looked charming in the eyes of Nivedita. One of her students described it in a memoir written soon after the passing away of the Sister, "The school is far from being in a healthy or well-ventilated house. The rooms are small and the roof is very low. During the summer (when the school remains closed) the rooms get so hot that half an hour's stay in them will make the head ache. . . . There were no fans hung in Nivedita's room. She always used to have a hand-fan about her. Most of the day she used to stay in that room buried in her work." Her work was mostly literary, and it was undertaken for the maintenance of the school. This income was very insufficient. At times when funds would fall short, Nivedita would curtail her

own very limited personal expenses, and would even deny herself the bare necessities of life. All this privation and neglect of health brought a serious illness on Nivedita in the early part of 1905. She recovered from it, but it was followed by a prolonged attack of malarial fever which she got as the result of her visit to the flood and famine stricken areas in Barisal in the autumn of 1906. The magnificent health of Nivedita broke down, and she could never regain it thereafter.

Nivedita led an intensely active life. Besides, attending to her school and literary work, she used to give frequent addresses to various andiences in Calcutta and elsewhere. Sometime after her return from the West in 1902 she went on a lecturing tour to Western India and later to Southern India, carrying everywhere the dynamic message of her Master and laying bare before all the glory of Hindu religion and culture, history and art. But in later years she devoted herself mostly to literary activities. Her comparatively silent life enabled her to spread her ideas very effectively through her writings. Besides she became a centre of great personal influence. Her home was ever open to all who sought her advice and service. Leaders of political thought, men of letters, scientists, artists, journalists, teachers and students alike often met there and them she inspired by the high ideals of her religious culture, spiritual nationalism and selfless service. She was one of the most patent forces that purified and intensified the national consciousness of all those who came under the spell of her influence, whether directly or indirectly. Hers was the call to "service and achievement for the motherland."—"No more words—words—words. Let us have deeds—deeds—deeds." In the words of one of her Western friends, "she talked ever more freely than she wrote, and her conversation rich, spontaneous, clear-cut as a judicial utterance, threw new light upon art, literature and even science, and revealed her bold and fiery aspirations after Indian nationality. If this was not her religion, it was certainly a large part of it, and it would be difficult to exaggerate her influence upon the national movement. . . Her influence over young Bengal was greater than most people have ever suspected."

Nivedita spent the last three years of her life in England and America. She returned to India during the first half of 1911. But she returned only to pass away in the lap of her adopted motherland to whose services she offered her body, heart and soul. She went for a change to Darjeeling. There she caught dysentery, and

passed away on 13th October, 1911. She retained consciousness till the very end. "The boat is sinking. But I shall see the sun rise," saying this she slept a sleep from which there was no return. The illusions of life were broken, and Nivedita passed into the abode of Light. The mortal body that she left was consumed by fire but the immortal soul, freed from the trammels of the world, attained to its true state in Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute.

Sister Nivedita has left to the world her immortal works—the best fruits of her deep study and wonderful experiences. It was undoubtedly the will of Providence that she chose to be a writer rather than a speaker. The mission of the twin souls whom she used to call Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, is being and will be admirably served through the circulation of her invaluable books which are reaching an ever increasing circle of readers both in the East and in the West. Her books give a faithful interpretation of the highest Hindu ideals realised by Western genius by piercing through the "fleshly screen" that hides the view of both the unsympathetic stranger and the blinded children of the land. Nivedita's *Kali the Mother* came as a revelation to people accustomed to look upon Her as the hideous and bloody goddess of destruction. "The Kali-image," She says, "is not so much a picture of the deity, as the utterance of the secret of our own lives. . . . Bend low, and you shall hear the answer that India makes to the Eternal Motherhood, through all her ages of torture and despair. Listen well, for the voice is low that speaks, and the crash of ruin mighty : 'Though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee!' ". In her *Web of Indian Life*, according to many, her greatest book, Nivedita reveals the undying spirit of India with unsurpassed beauty and faith. In her *Cradle Tales of Hinduism*, *An Indian Study of Love and Death* she speaks of the eternal ideals of India as realised in the past and to be realised in the future. In her master-piece—*The Master as I saw Him*—the last work to be published in her life time she narrates the story of the life and mission of her illustrious Master and of her unique experiences gained through her living touch with him. It is of this book that Prof. T. K. Cheyne of the Oxford University had said, "It may be placed among the choicest religious classics, below the various scriptures, but on the same shelf with the 'Confessions of Saint Augustine' and Sabatier's 'Life of Saint Francis' ". Nivedita's works :—*The Civic and National Ideals*, *Studies from an Eastern Home*, *Notes of*

some wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda, Footfalls of Indian History, Religion and Dharma, Siva and Buddha, Hints on Education etc.—most of which are collections of her numerous articles and essays contributed to various magazines interpreting the vital truths about the various aspects of Indian life and thought, history and tradition, art and architecture. Her works are very valuable contributions to world-thought. And they will be read with great interest and profit by all who want to possess a true insight into the various phases of Indian life, individual and collective.

It was the most earnest desire of Swami Vivekananda to inaugurate a movement for the regeneration of Indian womanhood. And to carry on this great work he wanted cultured and fearless Brahmacharinis who would lead a life of perfect chastity and spirituality, renunciation and service. "The celebate nuns," said the Swami, "will be teachers and preachers . . . . In villages and towns they will open centres and strive for the spread of female education. Through such devout preachers of character there will be the real spread of female education in the country." It is a pity that the Swami could not find among the daughters of India a single soul to take up this ideal. But he was fortunate in discovering in a noble daughter of the West the potentiality of a Hindu Brahmacharini, one who would be able not only to realise the ideal in her own life, but also speak of its glory to others for their benefit. And her the Swami trained with infinite patience and affection, and held as an ideal of a new type of womanhood,—an ideal embodied in his words of blessing addressed to his spiritual daughter Nivedita—

"The Mother's heart, the hero's will,
The sweetness of the southern breeze,
The sacred charm and strength that dwell
On Aryan altars, flowing, free ;
All these be yours, and many more,
No ancient soul could dream before
Be thou to India's future son
The mistress, servant, friend in one."

Nivedita was a very complex personality. And as such she was a living paradox to many. No kinder woman ever lived. She was always ready with her offering of love and service. But if she was beneficent, she was terrible also. She used to burst into indignant flash and veritable thunder to witness the insolence and

degradation to which the Indian was subjected. Says Mr. H. W. Nevinson, "There was no dull tolerance about her, and I suppose no one ever called her gentle. Even with friends her disagreement could be vehement, and her contradiction was very direct. In face of the enemy her eyes turned to glowing steel and under anger they deepened in colour. Her scorn of presumptuous ignorance and her indignation at wrong were blasting." There was always something flaming about her. The fire of Brahmacharya and Tapas—chastity and penance—endowed her with a charm and radiance, which illumined her friends but consumed her opponents, especially those who assumed a complacent and supercilous attitude towards India, her people and culture. She was unsparing in her criticism of the defects of Indian character. But she again it was who stood as an intrepid champion of all that was good and noble in Indian civilisation. She was not only a teacher at school, but a preceptress to the children of Mother India, to whom she revealed the greatness of their spiritual and cultural heritage with a unique sympathy, introspection and power. She was always confident of India's glorious future, and was providentially chosen to be one of those instrumental in ushering in the dawn of a new age in India. Indeed to the sons of India Nivedita had been, as her Master wished, "the mistress, servant, friend in one."

A TALK TO STUDENTS

(At Benares)

By Swami Atulananda

During my sojourn in India, this holy city of Benares, the ancient as well as the modern seat of Hindu culture and sanctity seems to act on me like a magnet. Every now and then in my wanderings in this vast and most interesting country of yours I am drawn to this great metropolis on the banks of the most sacred river in all India, and as I breathe in the atmosphere of Kasi I feel as if I were transplanted to a new world, a world set aside for a definite purpose.

Here, in the centre of India, I find a city given to a special ideal, and that ideal the loftiest that man can aspire to. For here, from East and West, north and south, from the most remote corners of the land people pour in day after day, year after year, century after century with the great purpose to study Truth, meditate on and to realize Truth; to come face to face with God.

The search for Truth is the occupation of every human being. Consciously or unconsciously our whole life is a search for Truth. It has been said that happiness is the aim of life. Every living being wants to be happy, to avoid misery. Correct! But the question is, what is true happiness?

Real happiness is found in Truth and in Truth alone, nowhere else; for Truth alone is Anandam, the highest Bliss. Every happiness we enjoy in life, whether it comes through the mind or the senses, is but a particle of that great happiness which we call Anandam. Every one of us wants Bliss. And instinctively we know that this Bliss is to be found somehow, somewhere. Therefore we can never be satisfied till we get it.

That this instinct is a true instinct, and not a vain imagination we know from our scriptures. They tell us that all creation is permeated with Bliss. *Anando Brahmeti vyajanat.* "From Bliss creation sprang into being, by Bliss it is maintained, towards Bliss does it proceed, into Bliss does it enter." And again: *Dyauh santirantarikshagun santih.* "Heaven is filled with peace, and so are the sky, earth, water, trees, the gods, the creator. All in peace. May that peace come to me." And that Santi, that peace, for which the Rishi prayed is not different from Anandam, Bliss.

So we all want happiness. It is the search for happiness that has brought you here, to Benares; that has made you enlist as students. Here you want to acquire the knowledge that may make it possible for us to live a happy, and I hope, a useful life. It is the search for happiness that draws thousands of pilgrims away from their homes to a strange city, away from their friends and relatives, to the bank of the Ganges, to the feet of Viswanath, the Lord of the Universe. It is the search for happiness that has brought me here from far away America, a distance of thousands of miles to learn the great lesson India has to teach, not only to me but to all sincere seekers after truth. It is the search for true happiness that has made you ask me to discuss the great problem of life, how to make the best use of our opportunities. Thus we go on seeking in all directions till we shall find that Anandam which is Truth itself.

Our condition in life is beautifully illustrated in the *Mundaka* and other Upanishads. Two birds are living on the same tree. The tree bears two kinds of fruit, sweet and bitter, but they look alike. One of the birds perched on the top of the tree sits there

quietly enjoying its own blissful condition. But the other bird hops from branch to branch greedy to eat of the fruit. When it pecks at a sweet fruit the bird is happy, but when it gets the bitter taste it is disgusted. Then it looks up to the other bird and thinks, "How happy you are! I was foolish to expect all the fruit to be sweet." Thinking thus the bird goes higher up in the tree towards its happy mate. But the fruits look so tempting, the bird forgets that sweet and bitter look alike, and again it eats, and the fruit is bitter. Thus on it goes: disappointment, and then drawing nearer to its mate, till at last the lower bird comes face to face with the upper bird. Then, suddenly, it realizes that it is only the shadow of the upper bird, and drawing still closer, it merges itself in the upper bird, and with it comes the realization that in its real essence it was the upper bird all the time.

This is life—the Jivatman tasting the pleasures and sorrows of the world till it merges into the Atman. Then comes the awakening that it was in reality the Atman all the time, that its true nature is Bliss itself.

It is one of the characteristics of the human mind, and a very happy and needful characteristic to be curious. Every moment of our lives we want to know something. The mind and the senses are always going outward, always inquisitive, always eager to gather information. So long this curiosity is not satisfied we remain restless, we cannot focus our mind, we cannot give our full attention to the work at hand.

We live in an era of unrest, of confusion. This is so not only in India but over the entire world. The greatest minds of to-day are occupied with the question how to bring some satisfaction, some harmony out of this chaos; how to settle this endless disputes between the different nations of the world. The great diplomats of to-day are racking their brains to find a solution to the question how to maintain peace, how to prevent another world-war more terrible than anything the world has ever witnessed. In America a prize of one hundred thousand dollars, three lakhs of rupees, was held out to the person who produced the best essay dealing with world-peace. But no satisfactory solution has yet been offered.

Now, it seems to me, that in theory at least the answer may be found in India, for your scriptures teach that all creation is one conscious whole, a living organism, of which each being is a

member. "All this is Brahman." We are all parts of one whole; every race, every individual, is a manifestation of one Supreme Being. All humanity, in truth, is one great Brotherhood.

But the world can not be satisfied with theories. This truth has to be made practical, was to be demonstrated. You have the theory. Now we look towards you for the practical demonstration.

What, Young India, have you to offer? What have you to show? Do you feel, do you act like members of a universal Brotherhood? Childish national vanity, treating with disdain other nations of which you know very little, underrating the spiritual and moral power of other races, regarding yourselves as the only chosen people, your country as God; and showing indifference towards the rest of the world,——this is conceit, this will never do! You will have to place yourselves on the universal plane. From there you shall have to think and act. Unless you are imbued with sympathy for the world, you cannot expect the world to sympathize with you.

My friends, the present leaders of world-movements are passing away. A few years more and you, who are students now will form part of the educated class in India. A great responsibility will be placed upon your shoulders, not only the responsibility of supporting a family, but also the responsibility resting upon every adult member of a great, civilized nation. The world is knit together as it was never before; no nation any longer can stand alone; your problems will be world-problems.

You are now to equip yourselves, to acquire knowledge, to develop character, to get strong mentally and physically, and, I hope, also spiritually. You are now to prepare yourselves for manhood, to lay the foundation of what constitutes a real man.

Some twenty years ago the Swami Vivekananda predicted the great catastrophe that overtook the West. He warned the Western nations that unless they turned to spiritual methods their materialistic civilization would crumble to pieces. His voice was like "the voice of one crying in the wilderness", unheeded. At present Western nations realize to some extent their mistake. But the wheel of events once set into motion is not so easily stopped. A voice is raised here and there to put a halt to the wild rush toward materialism; a warning note is sounded to turn to things spiritual. But readjustment is a gradual

process, it cannot be accomplished in a day. You know the old saying, Prevention is better than cure. The Swami Vivekananda has pointed out the way how India may avoid the mistakes of the West. And unless his advice is heeded the future of India looks dark indeed.

"The strength of India," The Swami " said, is in her religion. Not by imitating the West but by being true to her own principles India is sure to rise, to take her place once more among the civilized nations of the world. India stands for spirituality, and that spirituality she must bring to other nations taking in exchange whatever good the West has to offer."

Now, every nation is aware of the fact that her future strength depends on her youths. That is why at present the training of boys and girls in Western countries has become an all-important question. It is generally admitted that the old methods do no-longer suffice, and new methods of education are being introduced in every great city. It is everywhere recognized that there is something lacking in the young people who have finished their university course. Their brains are stuffed with knowledge, but they lack the wisdom to apply this knowledge to the best advantage, and they have not the character necessary to live and die for a great ideal. The cause of this inefficiency is now traced to a low standard of morality among the students. Moral and spiritual training has been neglected. The students often live a life of dissipation, wasting their strength before they enter upon manhood. They have not practised what has always been held as the highest ideal in India, namely Brahmacharya. In the *Mundaka Upanishad* it is said, " The Truth hidden in the heart, resplendent and pure can be attained by sound knowledge, and Brahmacharya constantly practised."

No youth can ever expect to become great unless he adheres to the rules of Brahmacharya laid down by all great teachers of India. The ancient Rishis in India in their forest universities enforced this rule on all their students. Chastity, truthfulness, integrity, were everywhere. insisted upon. "My hope for this country," the Swami Vivekananda exclaimed, " rests on the young healthy, the strong, the pure." And you all know how strongly Brahmacharya is advocated by your great national leader Mahatma Gandhi.

The corner-stone on which is built true manhood and character, is Brahmacharya. Train yourselves now, while you are

young, to be pure and truthful in word, thought and deed. It will give you tremendous brain-power, will-power, endurance, health and strength. Self-control practised in youth will bear fruit for the rest of your lives. All great men are chaste and truthful. That is what gives them their magnetic personality, what gives them their influence over other men. They are dynamos of strength because they have stored up their energy from their early boyhood. Dissipation wrecks the nervous system and weakens the brain. Practise Brahmacharya and a great future lies before you.

In ancient times in India, the universities were located away from the cities, away from the temptations found in crowded towns. In these forest retreats the students lived in close contact with their Guru, watching his behavior, serving him, learning from him. And the process of giving instruction was altogether different from what it is in the universities to-day.

" Education, " the Swami Vivekananda said, " is bringing out the perfection that is already in man." It does not mean over-loading the mind with knowledge of facts and data. It means bringing out the best that is inherent in every human being. It means bringing to the surface, and bringing into action the noble qualities of the soul. Education means character-building.

In India education and religion went hand in hand. "My religion," the Swami Vivekananda said, "is character building." This, the West has forgotten. Education has been divorced from religion. In the public schools in America religion is not allowed to be taught, there is no moral training. Hence their failure.

Your ancient Rishis knew better. They understood that religion and education should never be separated. The one is but the fulfilment of the other. No true education is possible without a high moral standard to build upon. The highest knowledge we can attain is the knowledge of the Atman, our true self. 'Knowing Him, everything else becomes known." So it is said in the Kathopanishad : None who has not turned away from bad conduct, whose senses are not under control, whose mind is not collected or at rest can attain the knowledge of the Atman.

The first instruction imparted in the ancient forest universities was moral conduct, control of the mind and the senses. Once the mind is controlled knowledge comes easily. A controlled mind can master all knowledge.

This is the second point I wish to emphasize. Practise control of mind. In your studies, in your games, practise control of mind. All great athletes know that half of their strength lies in controlling their minds. During their time of training they control their senses, they abstain from all forms of dissipation, they regulate their diet, they practise according to strict rules. And in the field they keep close watch over their minds, not to become ruffled by anything the opponent may perpetrate. And so it is in every pursuit of life. The business man, the lawyer, the inventor, every one knows that the secret of success lies in control of mind, never to get excited, never to get angry or annoyed, never to give way to outbursts of temper even under the most provoking conditions.

During your university career this is an important point to remember. Don't allow your mind to play tricks on you. Be master of your mind, not its slave. When it is time for study, study. When it is time for play, play, no matter what your mind may say. Your mind may be lazy, disinclined to work or play. Take hold of your mind, and force it to perform its duty.

Obedience to superiors was in the forest universities the method employed to master the mind, to keep it from being willful, from following its own inclinations. "Know the Atman, the Self, as the lord of the chariot," the *Kathopanishad* says, " the body is only the chariot, Intelligence is the driver, and the mind, the reins. The senses are the horses." " Intelligence, the Buddhi, must take firm hold of the mind, the reins, then, the horses will go in the right direction, and the chariot will reach the goal. Regulate your lives, have a program, set aside appointed hours for study as well as for recreation; and regulate your diet. It is difficult to acquire good habits. But once good habits are established life will run smoothly and the best results will be obtained. Study the biographies of successful men, and you will find that they live regulated lives. They first decide what they want to do, then they draw up a program, and then they adhere to that program allowing nothing to interfere. "He who has his mind always under control and who is pure," the scriptures say, "reaches the goal."

To be continued.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF THE DYING MOMENT

All the great seers of the world in their attempts to peep through the Shadow of Death have with one voice proclaimed the existence of a life after death. The Hindu and the Buddhist, the Christian and the Jew, the Mussalman and the Parsi—all believe in a life after death which has been declared to be a preparation for the future life. And although each religion in its own way pictures the vision of the Beyond none has failed to impress on its votaries the belief that the future life of man depends in some specially intimate way upon his state of mind at death.

In a recent issue of the *Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute* there appears an article on "The Hour of Death" by Mr. Franklin Edgerton of Yale University wherein he discusses the view points of the various religions concerning this interesting theme.

Even in the youngest of religions—Mohammedanism— we have traces of this belief—that the dying state of mind determines a man's future life. "Whoso's last words are the Kalima (profession of faith 'there is no God but God'), so runs the faith, will enter Paradise," and it is directed that this shall be recited in the presence of the dying. Thus we see a Mohammedan could be saved without reference to his past life if he but died with this specially holy formula on his lips.

Turning to Christianity we find the same idea. "The frame of mind," says Mr. Edgerton, "at the hour of death is of crucial importance in determining the fate of the soul after death." "The classical or canonical authority for the efficacy", continues the writer, "is the story of the Penitent thief at the Crucifixion; despite his evil life, Jesus assures him of Paradise because of his pious disposition at the end. * * * * In other words he (the Christian) conceived that at the moment when his fate in the next life would be decided, his spiritual state would be what it was at death without any particular reference to his previous life." In fact in the *Ritual Romanum*, the official ritual book of the Roman Catholic Church, a fifth of the whole Roman ritual is devoted to ceremonies concerned with man's last hour that he may chalk out a hopeful future.

Examining the sister religion, Judaism, what do we find? The Jewish ritual demands the dying man at his last hour to repeat thrice, "Blessed be His name whose glorious kingdom is for ever and ever" and seven times "The Lord He is God" if he wishes a happy future. Thus in Judaism as well as in Christianity man could get right with God at the last moment despite a long life of wickedness.

Nor is the religion of the Parsi lacking in this belief. Zorastrianism asks the dying man to confess his sins as does Christianity and then to repeat the *Ashem Vohu*—the sacred formula from the *Avesta* which plays exactly the role of the Hindu sacred Mantrams and the divine names among Hindu, Jew and Christian alike.

Now coming to India we observe the same belief in the three religions of India—Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Jainism believes that the life after death will depend upon the state of mind at death. It says that *nidana* (a wish for some worldly benefit in a future birth) is to be exercised at least at death even if it had not been entertained previously. So also does the Buddhist canon recognise this "Earnest wish" which in Pali goes by the name of *Patthana* or *abhinihara.* "Though a man", records the the *Milinda Panha,* "should have lived a hundred years of an evil life, yet if, at the moment of death, thoughts of the Buddha should enter his mind, he will be reborn among the Gods." Even in the case of Buddha himself it is said he attained his Buddhahood as a result of an *abhinihara* which he made under a previous Buddha Dipamkara.

But no trace of such a belief is to be found in the Vedic Samhitas. Therefore it is to be concluded that in India such a belief was a later growth. This idea seems to have gaind ground only in the Middle Vedic period or Brahmana period. It appears in the *Satapatha Brahmana.* Therein it is said that man's future depended upon his total frame of mind at the time when he passed away from the world. "He who is certain" says the Brahmana "that he will obtain the Atman which is his real Self after death his destiny is assured." Coming down to later times, in the period of the Upanishads we have a clear statement of this belief. The *Prasna Upanishad,* Chapter 3, Verses 9 and 10, tells us :—

"The Fire is verily Udana, for they in whom the fire has extinguished, go for rebirth with their senses absorbed in the mind. Whatever his thought (at the dying moment) with that he becomes the Prana; the Prana united with the fire leads on with the Atman into the desired world." From this it is clear that the thought entertained at the dying moment determines our next existence. And so it is that in the last moments of a man, the room he is in reverberates with the chant of Mantras in order that the dying man in that atmosphere of godliness may remember His name and attain salvation. The beautiful story of Ajamila need not be repeated here. He lived a life of sin and simply because in calling his son he uttered the name of Narayana—for that was his son's name—he attained to heaven.For It has been said that the Lord's name even unconsciously uttered will burn all the sins as a log of wood is burned by fire or disease by medicine. Such is the power of the Lord's name. Why seek in stories or legends for such authority. No less a person than the Lord Sri Krishna himself speaks to Arjuna : "He, who at the time of death, meditating on Me alone, goes forth leaving the body, attains My being: there is no doubt of this."

Whatever the basis of this notion may be we see that in the history of mankind there has been a common belief that the dying state of mind determined the course life would take after death. The thoughtful Hindu mind tried to connect a man's future life with the doctrine of Karma—'conceivng the state of the soul at death as a sort of automatic reflex or summary as it were of the soul's preceding life.' And hence the mind of man who had led a good life must be in a good state at the time of his death.

Europe and Christianity.

Western Christianity has received a rude shock at the hands of its professed adherents. Even at the beginning of the last century one could notice stirrings against that religion in the West. Lead by Comte, the Positivist, who propounded his three stages of thought—theological, metaphysical, and positive—the "progressives in the world of thought" attempted to lay bare the hollowness of Christianity and carried on a crusade against religion in general and founded a church of the "religion of humanity". Yet the great bulk of the population stuck to their old ways. But as the century rolled on, mighty inventions in the field of science slowly and silently undermined the very fundamentals of their ancient faith. It resulted in a division of the followers of Christ into Fundamentalists and Modernists. The controversy which led to this division is still raging in the West. The Fundamentalists hold that the whole Bible from cover to cover contains gospel truth ; that the cosmological and dogmatic conceptions are nothing but facts ; and that all achievements of science including even the latest are but "blasphemous attacks upon higher spiritual interests' The Modernist on the other hand demands a rationalistic explanation of the world, and is prepared to bow down to science and understand the Bible in its light.

A careful examination of the History of Europe reveals to us that Christianity has ceased to be a potent factor because "the shepherds of the flock" have failed to follow Christ and live like him. While the Prince of Peace called upon his disciples to take up the cross and follow him, his followers livnig a life of luxury and ease have sought to place him on a throne of gold with the sceptre of the tyrant in his hand. With a Bible in one hand and a gun in the other European Christianity has been marching "carrying light to the barbarous" and gaining more and more in her material prosperity. The Sacred name of Christ has been defiled and made an instrument for her self-aggrendisment.

Defacing Christ in this manner brought about the terrible tragedy of 1914. The peace of Europe broke in that year. Europe with all her knowledge of science managed to maim or kill, during a period of about seven short years more people than all her science could save during the period of half a century of peace that preceded it. Suffering, intense suffering, has opened the eyes of Europe today. There has been a sincere demand for religion. Many have begun to feel that religion should not be departmental, but should permeate and control all departments

of life. They have also begun to feel that it is the only solace in life. Where can the solace come from ? Can it be from the truths of professed Christianity which she has begun to suspect ? Already the intellect of Europe has questioned the existence of Christ himself. In 1922 M. Loisy published his *Les Livres des Nouveaw Testament*, one of the most important and significant books on this subject. There he re-arranges the New Testament and practically surrenders the whole gospel story as history and speaks of the chain of events therein as symbolical or fictional. Another student of the origins of Christianity, Dr. Couchoud, has declared in his *Enigma of Jesus* "that as a historical personage Jesus is unknown" and that "Jesus is derived from induction". One of the Scholars of this School, Dr. Georg Brandes, a Danish Professor has lately published his *Jesus a Myth.* In it the learned professor maintains that Jesus is as legendary in character as William Tell and others. A writer in the *Sunday Chronicle* in reviewing this book states; "From all countries there are signs of the existence of a deliberate war on religion" meaning Christianity and "anti-Christian demonstrations are being deliberately fomented, religious belief of all description is being violently assailed, and the war against what is termed the 'autocracy of God' is being openly proclaimed." The same writer describes Dr. Brandes' Book, as a "powerful intellectual attempt to destroy the historical basis of Christianity." The West is thus divided against itself in the matter of its beliefs.

No doubt science by its discoveries has ministered successfully and ably to the material well-being of Europe, but it has failed to give her peace of mind. Science has given Europe, health, innumerable ways of physical enjoyment and has made her as it were the Supreme ruler of the world : but this same science has equipped her with terrible weapons for a whole-sale slaughter of men. Nor have the theories of Individualism and Socialism procured her peace. While Individualism has brought in its train social anarchy, Socialism has left her in the clutches of the tyranny of capitalists who fatten themselves on the misery of the many. Material prosperity having been secured, the scientific West thought that the long-wished for millennium was at hand. But unfortunately it was the butchering of millions perpetrated in the name of the Prince of Peace—the Christ—that Europe witnessed. The mournful West has become disillusioned. She seeks peace which science has failed to give. She wants a religion which calls forth what is highest and best in humanity without being indifferent or negligent at the same time to the social order which so largely determines the individual's aims, duties and standards of Judgment. As Christianity has failed to satisfy Europe in its demand for peace it has turned its attention to other religions. And hence we find a mosque to-day in England—England which centuries ago sent a crusade against Islam, and some English people embracing Islam. But more than Islam, the religion of Buddha is appealing to the people of Europe. Only the other day a learned European spoke to an Indian that the future religion of Europe would be "some form of Buddhism." In his article on "The Buddhist Home" in German by Ralf Henkel and translated by Daya for the benefit of the readers of the *British Buddhist*, we obtain some idea of the position of Buddhism in Europe today.

"Today Europe has ten thousand followers of the Buddha." He says, "Almost all the doctrines of the Buddha are translated into German and propagated in even translations—a work of culture, which is envied by the experts of other nations. In Vienna and Berlin there are people who prepare themselves to go to those lands where Buddhism is kept in its pure and original form (Ceylon, Burma and Siam) to live the life of Buddhist monks. A huge Buddhist Library was founded in Siam, whose king is the Patron of Buddhism. In Ceylon and Rangoon colonies of German Buddhist Monks have been formed. Even in Europe different endeavours are noticeable whose chief aim is to make it possible for the people of the West to lead the highest and Natural Moral life, which Buddhism teaches. Even in the island of Capri there lives a Buddhist Community. Shortly a large Buddhist Church will be built in London. There is a similar establishment in Denmark." Nor is this all. Under the patronage of the Soviet Government preparations are now being made for the establishment of an Academy for the study of Buddhism in Leningrad.

We welcome these changes. Religion is a matter of the individual and man must have full liberty to follow his conscience. Said the sages of India एकं सत विप्राः बहुदा वदन्ति. 'That which exists is one sages call it variously.' Only when this is realised and life regulated to fall in with it that peace and good will can reign on earth.

NEWS AND REPORTS

MAHASAMADHI

Srimat Swami Saradananda, the venerable Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, has passed away. From our midst has been suddenly removed a towering personality of rare spiritual attainments, a most loving teacher and leader who, with wonderful tact, patience and devotion, guided the growth and activities of the Ramakrishna Mission ever since its inception more than quarter of a century back.

Endowed with a remarkable spirit of selflessness and sacrifice possessed of a mighty heart overflowing with love and sympathy, the Swami was ever ready to bear the burden of others, and gave to a large number of world-weary and struggling souls the solace and protection which they sought in vain in other quarters. We are overwhelmed by the keen sense of loss sustained by us, both personally and collectively, in the demise of the illustrious Swami. His noble and dignified personality, grave and steady, calm and peaceful, be-speaking the natural depth of his soul and a wonderful combination of all the highest qualities of head and heart, of knowledge and devotion, work and meditation will be missed not only by ourselves, but also by his innumerable disciples, devotees and admirers to whom his presence was a perennial source of peace and blessedness.

The Swami was one of the few blessed souls who along with their chief, Swami Vivekananda, sat at the feet of their Divine Master, Sri Ramakrishna, and learned from him the ways to God-realisation and service. And later on he proved to be one of the greatest apostles of Hinduism not only in India, but also in America where he won the admiration of all who came in close touch with him by his charming manners, deep erudition and impressive lectures and class-talks.

The Swami was suffering from various ailments for sometime past. Of late he showed some signs of improvement which turned to be but the forerunner of the approaching end. After his usual meditation in the evening of the 6th August, he had a sudden attack of apoplexy. Inspite of the best medical aid, he did not regain his consciousness, and entered into Mahasamadhi at 2-34 A.M on the 19th August. Followed by a huge procession, the Swami's ,body was brought in the morning from Baghbazaar, Calcutta where he was staying, to Belur Math, and was consecrated to the fire on the banks of the Holy Ganges.

At the end of his life-long labour the great worker has been called to rest. From the murdane world he has gone to the abode of Immortality and Bliss. But as an ideal monk and religious preceptor, whose central theme of life was Divine realisation, stern renunciation and loving service, as the inspired author of the immortal biography of his Master, the *Sri Ramakrishna Leelaprasanga*, the most authentic, scholarly and philosophical work on the subject, as one of the dynamic personalities who brought the Ramakrishna Mission into being, nourished it with their life's blood and developed it into a great organisation with nearly a hundred branches in India and abroad, Swami Saradananda's memory will continue to be a source of inspiration and strength to those whom he has left behind, nay, it will be ever cherished by posterity with sincere admiration and heartful devotion. May his spirit abide with us for ever !

Om Shantih ! Shantih !! Shantih !!!

SWAMI SHARVANANDA AT SIMLA

After founding a centre of the Ramakrishna Order at Delhi in May last the Swami Sharvananda left for Simla where he stayed for two months. During his stay there he delivered a series of lectures in English and Bengali on diverse religious subjects as "God, Soul and Matter," "The Message of the Universal Religion," "Law of Karma," "Mayavada," "Secret of Worship," etc. The Swami's lectures were very much appreciated and have evoked great enthusiasm among the people there.

SWAMI NIRMALANANDAJI AT MADRAS

After a few months' stay at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Trivandrum, Swami Nirmalanandaji, President of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore arrived at Madras on Sunday, the 14th August on his way to Calcutta.

The Swami acceded to the request of some of the devotees to have a religious conversazione instead of the usual class held at the Math every sunday evening. The talk of the evening centered on Bhakti. In the course of the talk the Swamiji pointed that the real Bhakta did not care for worldly gains or worldly loss, but was one, who wholly resting in the lord looked upon himself as the son of the Lord and thereby becoming completely fearless, did not shudder, like the Jnani, at the miseries of the world. The Bhakta was therefore prepared to take any number of births and undergo all kinds of sufferings in order that he may enjoy the presence of the Lord within and without. He never wanted like the Jnani to merge himself in Brahman and put an end to the joys and sorrows incidental to human birth. So the Bhakta was a real hero and quoting the instance of Hanuman, the greatest of Bhaktas, he showed that he was even superior to the Jnani. In fact the true Bhakta, never possessed a slave mentality as was generally supposed. On the other hand he always carried a heroic will.

After the clearing a few doubts raised by the devotees the class dispersed. The Swamiji left for Calcutta the very same night.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, OOTY

A very interesting function took place on Wednesday, the 10th August in the presence of a large gathering when the Ramakrishna Mission branch at Ootacamund, received a free gift of the handsome Panchakshara hall from messers P. M. Sadasiva Mudaliar, P. M Guruswami Mudaliar, P. M, Pasupati Mudaliar and P. M. Raja Bahadur Mudaliar—the wealthy Indian planters of the Nilgiris. The hall which is situated close to the main bazaar is a decent building where religious discourses could regularly be delivered for the benefit of the townspeople. The object of the function was to hand over the title-deeds of this property formally to Swami Yatiswarananda, President of the Ramakrishna Mission, Madras, who had gone there for the purpose.

During the function another timely gift came from the hands of the Maharaja of Jodphur. The Maharaja sent a sum of Rs. 4000 in addition to Rs. 1000 already given towards meeting the expenses for putting up the habitation for the Mission at Ooty recognising thereby the Mission, work and his Highness's interest in the welfare of the Hindus inhabiting the hills.

LECTURES BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

Under the auspices of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Ootacamund, Swami Yatiswarananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, delivered a series of three lectures, one at the Ashram and the other two at the Panchakshara Hall on the 14th, 21st and 28th August. The subjects of his address were, "The Goal of Life," "The Message of Sri Ramakrishna" and "Varnashrama Dharma" respectively. The lectures were very much appreciated by the audience.

SWAMI RAGHAVANANDA'S ARRIVAL FROM AMERICA

Swami Raghavananda of the Vedanta Society, Ramakrishna Mission, New York, U.S.A. arrived at the Sri Ramakrishna

Math, Madras, from Colombo, on the morning of the 23rd August last, after a stay of four years in America. Early in June last, he left America and came to London, where he stayed for sometime. In London he spoke on several occasions to small groups of people and held classes on Hindu religion and philosophy. In Holland he stayed a few days with a friend and spoke on one occasion to a small group on Vedanta. In Berlin, Prof. Glasenapp of the Berlin University, invited him to take one of his lectures in the Oriental Seminary. And there the Swami spoke to an audience of students and professors on "Yoga and its Relation to Indian life." Prof. Glasenapp who presided, translated the lecture in German for those who did not understand English. Then passing through France and after a few days' stay at Paris, he took boat at Marseilles and reached Colombo on the 20th August. In Colombo Swamis Vipulananda and Avinashananda met him and he stayed with them for some time and spoke on the day he left, to friends and members of the Vivekananda Society, Colombo, on the message of Vedanta in the West.

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA'S BIRTHDAY

The Birthday of Swami Ramakirshnananda which came off on Thursday, the 25th of August was ceremoniously observed at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore. The programme of the day included special Puja and Bhajana.

The Ramakrishna students' Home founded by Swami Ramakrishnananda, observed with solemnity their founder's day. There was special puja and Bhajana by the boys of the Home. Swami Raghavananda who happened to be in Madras en-route to Calcutta from America spoke to the boys in the morning on the Life of the Swami Ramakrishnananda. In the evening also Swami Raghavananda gave an address to the new graduates of the Home on the Duties and Responsibilities of their life.

RAMAKRISHNA TAPOBAN, DHARCHOLA—AN APPEAL

Situated in the heart of the Himalayas, out of the reach of civilisation the above Ashram has been rendering a signal service to the poor illiterate inhabitants of the locality. Through the kind help of some Bhutia merchants it has started a free residential school and a charitable dispensary; but for want of funds the activity of the Ashram is greatly handicapped. At present the Ashram requires two buildings, one for the school and the other for the accomodation of the workers and students—the cost of which is estimated at Rs. 5000. The charitable dispensary also needs sufficient medicine and other medical necessaries.

The Ashram appeals to the generous public for extending their helping hand. We hope all benevolent people will contribute liberally and enable the workers to be of greater service to the country.

Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received by Swami Anubhavananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Tapoban, Dharchola, P. O. Dt, Almora, U.P.